

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
PLANNING AND DESIGN COMMITTEE  
Mansfield Downtown Partnership Office  
1244 Storrs Road**

**Tuesday, January 19, 2010**

**MINUTES**

Members: Steve Bacon, Karla Fox, Manny Haidous, Jon Hand, Chris Kueffner, Frank McNabb, Peter Millman, Ruth Moynihan and Betsy Paterson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

Guests: Lon Hultgren (Town of Mansfield), Lou Marquet, Macon Toledano (LeylandAlliance), Geoff Fitzgerald, Derek Kohl, Jennifer Usher (BL Companies)

**1. Call to Order**

Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes from August 18, 2009 and October 20, 2009**

Betsy Paterson moved to approve the August 18, 2009 minutes. Frank McNabb seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously. Ms. Paterson moved to approve the minutes from October 20, 2009. Mr. McNabb seconded the motion. The motion was approved with one abstention from Ms. Paterson.

**4. Presentation on Storrs Road Design and Next Steps**

Mr. Bacon introduced Derek Kohl, Jennifer Usher and Geoff Fitzgerald from BL Companies who are working on the Storrs Road design. Committee members introduced themselves.

Mr. Bacon reiterated that the Partnership had secured several grants for Storrs Road on behalf of the Town including a state Urban Action Grant which includes design funding for Storrs Road. BL Companies was hired to conduct the design work. Mr. Bacon said the stage has been reached where a public presentation is required on the design. The goal today is for the Committee to review the design and provide input to BL Companies.

Mr. Kohl, project manager, reviewed the process to date. He said the State Traffic Commission approved the project last year and it looked at the impact of Storrs Center on traffic and Storrs Road. Design was only conceptual at the time of the approval. BL is now working on more detailed design which includes putting together construction documents.

The design has been submitted to the Town of Mansfield Public Works Department and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership for staff review.

Mr. Kohl reviewed the next steps with the CT Department of Transportation (CDOT). He said that CDOT is provided the work product at Preliminary Design (30 percent), Semi-Final Design (75 percent), Final Design (90 percent) and Final Completed Design (100 percent). At 100 percent, the project is ready to go out for bid.

Mr. Kohl said that the 30 percent design establishes a base line with respect to lane widths, lane arrangements, drainage, easement lines, construction rights (i.e., from property owners), etc. Mr. Kohl said the details with respect to streetscape design comes at 75 percent of design. At that point, specifications with respect to materials are proposed.

Mr. Kohl said BL has proposed a preliminary, conservative schedule which they will work to expedite. The current projection is for construction to start in 2011. The length of time is partly due to the 4 required submissions to CDOT at the stages noted above. He said there are up to 19 review units at CDOT that will have a role in reviewing the design. The CDOT review timeframe is typically 4 to 8 weeks. With respect to timing, a lot of the Connecticut "stimulus" projects will be going out to bid the same time the Storrs Road project comes in for review at 30 percent.

Mr. Kohl said his team will work with the Town to compress the schedule as much as possible. Another issue is working around the winter months. Mr. Kohl also suggested working with the Town to break the project out in phases so that some of the utility work could be done in the fall of 2010.

Mr. Kohl said that the University needs to prepare the water and sewer stubs to the project and will be working on the Mansfield Road realignment this summer (Ms. Usher is the project manager for this project).

Frank McNabb asked about the next steps. Macon Toledano said that the University needs to replace sewer lines in Storrs Road. The design needs to be concluded before the Town does its work. Ruth Moynihan asked where the new lines would be located. Lon Hultgren said the lines will go from S. Eagleville to the north of Mansfield Road.

Mr. Toledano reiterated that the Mansfield Road realignment work is planned for this summer. Ms. Usher said the construction documents are expected to be completed in February and construction would start in May. The project also includes adding a right turn only lane. Peter Millman asked why the work needs to be done. Mr. Fitzgerald

said the goal is to make the turn coming out of the Bishop Center more safe for pedestrians in particular. The work will also help with traffic flow particularly on the main campus side of the road.

Mr. Millman suggested that the public meeting include mention of the Mansfield Road project so people will understand that the goal is to make the corridor work more effectively.

Karla Fox noted that the sewer work would need to go to the Buildings and Grounds Committee at the University and then to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Mr. Toledano noted that the Storrs Road construction will be tied into Phase 1A site work.

Mr. Kohl made the point that the Storrs Road project is not a roadway project but a roadway/streetscape project. He said they worked with master developer LeylandAlliance to get approval from CDOT to have on-street parallel parking.

Jon Hand said it was his understanding that diagonal parking was more effective than parallel. Mr. Kohl said there are pros and cons. Diagonal parking can be difficult for cars to pull away. He said parallel parking tends to work better on narrower roads.

With respect to trees, Mr. Fitzgerald said the existing trees behind the stone wall on the high school side of the road will be preserved. There will be trees in some of the medians in the road. They can be effective for traffic calming.

Manny Haidous asked how long the construction would take if it begins in spring 2011. Mr. Kohl said the work will take a solid construction season. The bulk of the work can be done in three months in the summer. The sidewalks and landscaping could be done in the fall. Overall the project would take 6 to 9 months with two months on the front and back end for mobilization and clean-up.

Mr. McNabb asked if traffic would be diverted off Storrs Road. Mr. Kohl said one lane of traffic will be maintained at all times. They may propose one way alternating during off-peak hours.

Mr. Haidous asked how the work on Storrs Road affects the market square work which is a later phase. Mr. Toledano said that curb cuts would be made near to when Storrs Road work begins. They may need to be adjusted when market square construction starts.

Ms. Moynihan asked if the street would be widened. Mr. Kohl said there will be some widening to fit the medians.

Chris Kueffner asked about the change in curb cut near the Town Hall/High School entry. Mr. Fitzgerald said to accommodate the left turn from the north into market square, and to lessen stacking, the entry is proposed to be moved.

Mr. Millman said that there is a concern about traffic flow and whether it will be slowed by the project. Mr. Kohl said the effort was made to find an acceptable level of service while focusing on accommodating the pedestrian in a better way than he/she is now. Mr. Kohl said the improvements at the intersections including doing away with one light at the Bolton Road intersection, will help with traffic flow. He said the travel may be somewhat slower but more consistent.

Mr. Bacon asked about the coordination of signaling between S. Eagleville and N. Eagleville. Mr. Fitzgerald said he thought the intersections should process cars more effectively.

Betsy Paterson said she preferred moving steadily at a slower pace instead of stopping and starting.

Mr. Millman suggested that bullet points be pulled together for the public presentation to address the attributes of "traffic calming."

Mr. Kohl said that BL hopes to get comments from CDOT as they come in from CDOT sections, rather than as one package, so they can begin addressing them immediately. BL reconciles the comments and then has a review meeting with CDOT. The public information meeting is official approval from the Town to keep moving ahead. The meeting is subject to public notice requirements by the Town. The Town staff moderates the meeting, not CDOT.

Mr. Kohl said access to all buildings will be maintained during construction.

Mr. Millman made the point that the stone wall may help to prevent students from crossing at places other than the cross walks. This would be a point worth making at the public presentation.

Mr. Hand asked if there was consideration given to dead ending Dog Lane at Storrs Road? Mr. Toledano said it was discussed but there was concern about taking it away from the neighborhood structure. Dog Lane, though, should feel like a secondary road with the main entry on that end of the project being the new road directly across from Bolton Road. This section of Dog Lane could be closed for the *Festival on the Green*, and other events.

Mr. Hultgren said that all three grants the Town has received for Storrs Road improvements will fund between Mansfield Road and S. Eagleville Road. The goal is to make the bid process as smooth as possible given there are three grants from two different funding sources (federal and state).

Mr. Bacon asked about whether there is enough funding in all the grants. Mr. Hultgren said \$1.3 million is included for undergrounding of utilities. This is one area that could be reduced if necessary. Mr. Hultgren said CDOT requires almost 25 percent of the project cost for contingency, design review, materials testing, and construction inspection. Other possibilities to scale back on would be width of sidewalk or decorative components.

Mr. Kueffner said it was important for the stone walls to look authentic. Mr. Hultgren suggested that this be an aspect that the Committee review.

## **5. Update on Parking Steering Committee and Intermodal Facility**

Ms. Fox said the Steering Committee is focused on looking at on-street, parking garage, and surface parking. At its last meeting, Andy Hill with Walker Parking, benchmarked parking in other communities set in a rural area with a college.

Ms. Fox said the agenda for the next meeting is reviewing an estimate for costs on all types of parking.

Mr. Toledano and Mr. Hultgren said the Request for Qualifications for the design of the intermodal facility is being sent to the state and federal funding agencies tomorrow for review.

## **6. Topics for Next Meeting**

Ms. van Zelm said that Sandy Baxter with Youth Services has been working with the Mansfield Advocates for Children on providing services for children in the 0 to 8 year range. The Mansfield Advocates for Children want to explore what might be available in Storrs Center for public spaces for this age group. Ms. van Zelm said that she met with a class at Yale that looked at this issue and was trying to track down some of their work prior to the meeting.

## **7. Adjourn**

Mr. Kueffner make a motion to adjourn. Mr. McNabb seconded the motion. The Committee adjourned at 6:45 pm. The next meeting will be February 16 at 5 pm.